

# GUITAR **DVD**

**PAUL GILBERT** presents  
**SHRED ALERT!!!**

★  
THE  
ULTIMATE  
DVD  
GUIDE!  
★

# **GUITAR** DVD **PAUL GILBERT** presents **SHRED ALERT!!!**

## **1. ALTERNATE UNIVERSE**

Using alternate picking and note skipping to play interesting arpeggio patterns

## **2. READY TO RUMBLE**

Quick, effective pick-hand warm-up exercises

## **3. READY TO RUMBLE, PART 2**

More pick-hand warm-up exercises

## **4. ASSUME THE POSITION**

Using position shifts to your advantage when soloing

## **5. ACCENTUATE THE POSITIVE**

Alternate picking with accent patterns

## **6. FAST AND CLEAN**

Alternate-picked 16th notes—the business card of shred guitar

## **7. STICK YER NECK OUT**

Using neck diagrams to your advantage

## **8. SHAPE SHIFTING**

How to organize patterns on the fretboard

## **9. SNAKE-CHARMING LICKS**

The fifth mode of harmonic minor

## **10. UNITED MUTATIONS**

Mastering muting techniques

## **11. BREAKIN' OUT**

The blessings and benefits of live performance

# ALTERNATE UNIVERSE

## USING ALTERNATE PICKING AND NOTE SKIPPING TO PLAY INTERESTING ARPEGGIO PATTERNS

**HI, AND WELCOME** to the first chapter of Shred Alert, where I'll teach you many of the techniques I use. Let's begin with a very simple picking exercise (**FIGURE 1**) and look

at some of the neat and musically interesting variations you can spin from it. We have two notes, E and B, picked repeatedly with alternating downstrokes and upstrokes, a technique known as *alternate picking*. This is a good exercise for what I call "outside picking," as the pick movement is consistently on the "outside" of the pair of strings, which is considerably easier than "inside picking."

What I am going to do now is expand on this idea by applying a mathematical pattern to an Em triad arpeggio (E G B). In **FIGURE 2a**, the notes are played sequentially in an ascending fashion in two octaves across the neck; in **FIGURE 2b**, the same notes are played in a different position as a sweep-picked arpeggio (sweep picking involves dragging the pick across the strings in a single downward or upward motion).

This is how most rock guitarists play arpeggios—straight up and down. What I like to do in order to create a more interesting *melodic contour* is apply a note-skipping pattern that goes "up two, back one, up two, back one," etc., as demonstrated in **FIGURES 3a-d**: in **FIGURE 3a**, instead of playing E to G, I play E to B, just like our initial picking exercise. In **FIGURE 3b**, I move on to the next pair, G-E, using the same "outside picking" motion. Now that we have a new pattern, let's get it under our fingers by alternating between each note pair (**FIGURE 3c**). **FIGURE 3d** shows the next pair, B and G, and all three pairs are played in sequence in **FIGURE 4a**. The pattern sounds cool when continued across three octaves, as demonstrated in **FIGURES 4b** and **FIGURE 4c**.

This note-skipping concept can be applied to other arpeggios, as well as scales. A very common chord progression in rock and metal is Em D5 C5 (**FIGURE 5a**). It's standard practice with this progression to substitute the raised, or sharp, four (#4) for the five of the C5 chord, sounding C and F# instead of C and G. This alludes to the C Lydian mode, shown in ascending four-note groups in **FIGURE 5b**.

Instead of just playing a C major triad (C E G) over C5, let's add the #4 to the mix, as shown in **FIGURE 6** with the notes C, E, F# and G. If we apply the note-skipping concept, we get C-F# as our first pair (**FIGURE 7a**). **FIGURE 7b** illustrates the ensuing sequence played across

three octaves. It's also fun to play each pair as a two-note chord (**FIGURE 7c**).

Try applying this approach to whatever scale or mode you can think of. As shown in **FIGURE 8a**, it works well with E Dorian, the E blues scale and an A diminished-seven arpeggio. □

FIGURE 1

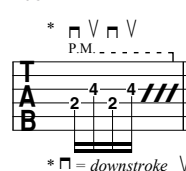


FIGURE 2

Em triad

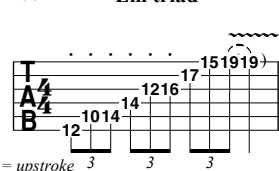


FIGURE 2b

sweep arpeggio

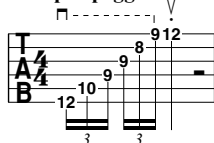


FIGURE 3a

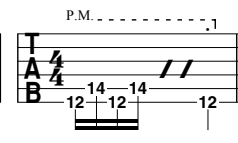


FIGURE 3b

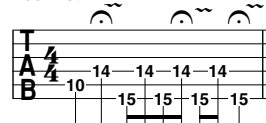


FIGURE 3c

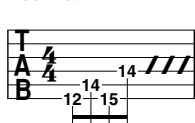


FIGURE 3d

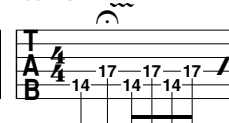


FIGURE 4a



FIGURE 4b

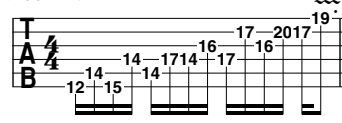


FIGURE 4c

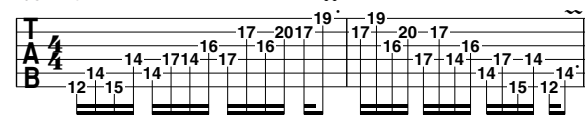


FIGURE 5a

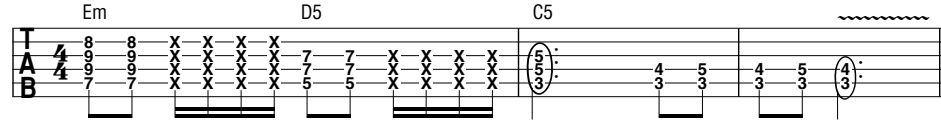


FIGURE 5b

C Lydian mode



FIGURE 6



FIGURE 7a

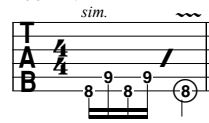


FIGURE 7b

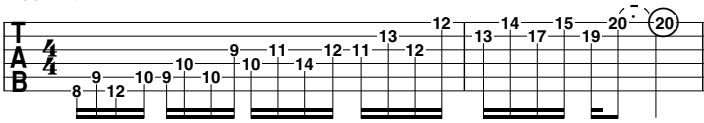


FIGURE 7c

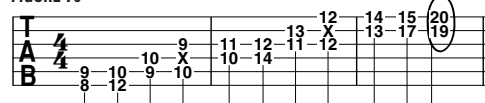
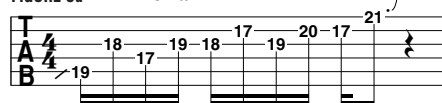
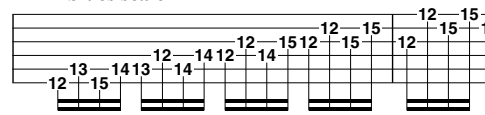


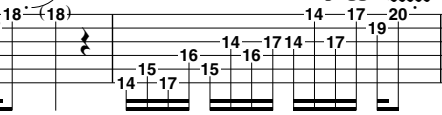
FIGURE 8a



E blues scale



A diminished-seven arpeggio



# ★ CHAPTER 2 ★

## READY TO RUMBLE

### QUICK, EFFECTIVE PICK-HAND WARM-UP EXERCISES

IN THIS CHAPTER, I'd like to show you my favorite right-hand (pick-hand) warm-up exercise. I use this exercise at every show, every clinic and any time I need to warm-up my right hand before performing.

The entire exercise is played on the top three strings in a rhythm of repeating eighth-note triplets. This means that each beat in a bar of 4/4 is divided like this: ONE-trip-let, TWO-trip-let, THREE-trip-let, FOUR-trip-let. To play each eighth-note triplet, I use a picking motion of up-up-down. As illustrated in **FIGURE 9**, I pick the open high E string with an upstroke, followed by the open B picked with an upstroke, followed by the open G string picked with a downstroke. I also use palm-muting (P.M.) to attain a more staccato (detached) sound. Palm muting is performed by resting the edge of the pick-hand palm across all of the strings, at the bridge saddles.

Note that the upstrokes are performed as individual strokes, as opposed to picking a single upstroke dragged across the top two strings, which would be what's known as a reverse sweep or reverse rake. It requires more muscle movement and coordination to perform two upstrokes, but that's why this is a good warm-up exercise—repeating three distinct picking motions in this way will build up the muscles in the pick hand.

Because I get bored hearing the same three open strings over and over, I like to use different chords to make the exercise sound more interesting. As shown in **FIGURE 10**, I can barre across the top three strings at the fifth fret to sound an Am triad. This will soon get monotonous as well, so I can easily make it sound more interesting by changing the note on the high E string to imply a melody, as demonstrated in **FIGURE 11**.

In order for this exercise to be an effective warm-up, I need to keep picking the strings in this way for at least two minutes, which of course inspires me to move around the fretboard a little bit and find some other interesting shapes and figures to play. Let's start with different inversions (chord voicings) of Am, as shown in **FIGURE 12a**: I begin in eighth position, with the minor third, C, on top, and then shift up to a 12th-position inversion of Am with the fifth, E, on top.

Likewise, I'll alter the note on the high E string for a little variety, as in **FIGURE 12b**. Another good thing to do is to practice picking dynamics, by picking softer or louder, or switching between

the two. You'll find that when playing very quietly it takes a lot of control to keep the picking even.

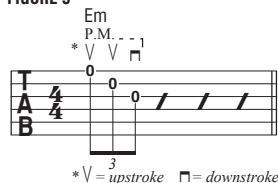
Let's move to some different chords: **FIGURE 12c** begins with a G major voicing, again altered by changing the note on the high E string; **FIGURE 12d** features an ascending D diminished-seven voicing, and **FIGURE 12e** begins with some natural harmonics (N.H.), sounded by lightly



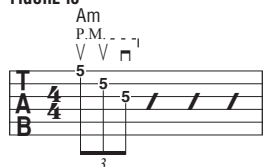
laying a fret-hand finger across the top three strings directly above the fretwire.

If you play all of these figures in sequence without stopping, you will have repeated this picking motion for about three minutes. By this point, your pick-hand will be warmed up. In the next chapter, I'll offer some permutations on this useful and effective exercise. □

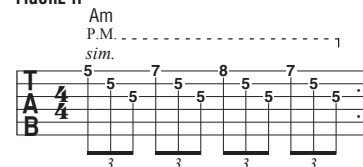
**FIGURE 9**



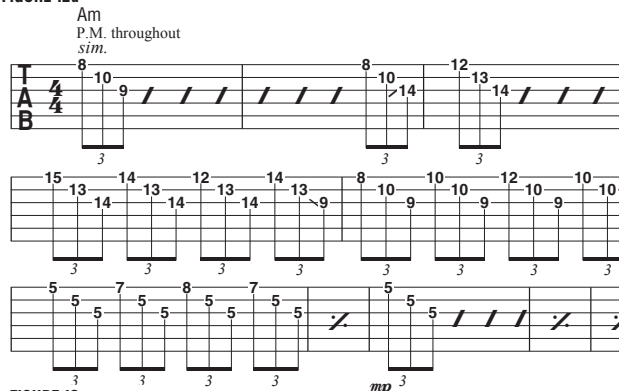
**FIGURE 10**



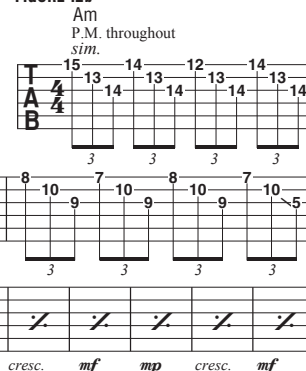
**FIGURE 11**



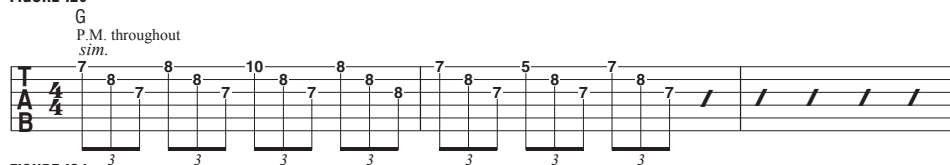
**FIGURE 12a**



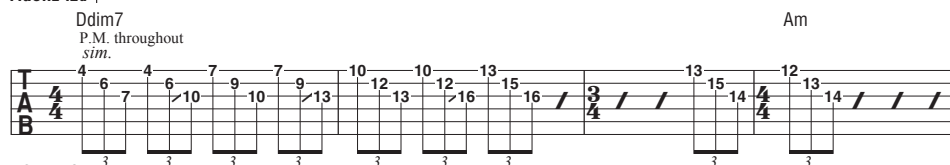
**FIGURE 12b**



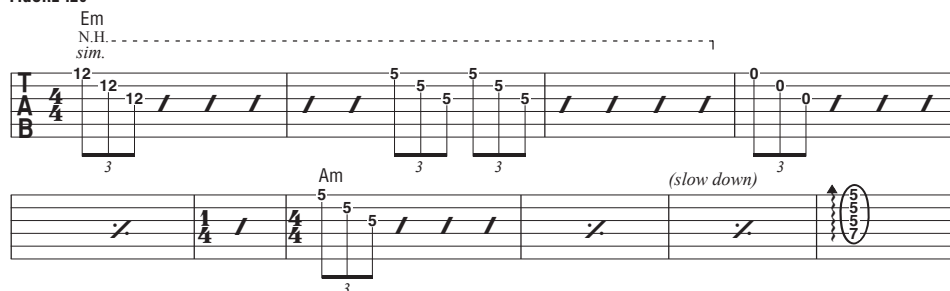
**FIGURE 12c**



**FIGURE 12d**




**FIGURE 12e**



The first thing I did with the scale was to *harmonize* it in three-note chords, as shown in the first bar of **FIGURE 14**. Starting with an E<sup>+</sup> (E augmented) triad, I move the chord shapes down the neck by shifting each note on each string to the next lower scale tone on that string, i.e., the E note on the fourth string moves down to D, the G<sup>♯</sup> on the third string moves to F and the C on the second string moves to B. The process continues down the fretboard to first position.

Now that you have a handle on the concept, let's experiment by moving these chord shapes around the board in different patterns: as shown in **FIGURE 15**, I begin by descending in the same

Once you've become comfortable with the picking technique and musical concept, try to invent your own ways of connecting these kinds of triadic chord shapes. For the truly adventurous and ambitious, try applying the pattern to all the other groups of three adjacent strings. 

P.M. throughout

The musical score consists of three systems of music, each with a treble clef and a 4/4 time signature. The first system includes a key signature change to one sharp (F#) and a tempo marking of *sim.* (allegretto). The second system continues the piece with various fingerings and articulations. The third system concludes the piece with a final cadence and a fermata over the final note.

13 13 12 10 10 9 9 7 9 6 5 7 4 6 3 2 3 1 1 / 6

5 4 3 2 6 5 5 4 9 9 6 5 10 9 9 7 13 13 12 10 10 9 9 7 7

6 5 5 4 3 2 1 1 3 2 7 6 5 10 9 14 13 14 15 15

# ASSUME THE POSITION

## USING POSITION SHIFTS TO YOUR ADVANTAGE WHEN SOLOING

I'D LIKE TO ADDRESS the dodgy subject of "position shifting."

A great way to jump into this topic is to use as our basis one of the most commonly used scales in rock, the minor pentatonic. **FIGURE 16** illustrates A minor pentatonic played in fifth position. Most guitar players have played this scale in this position a million times. In this chapter, I'll show you how to play it "outside of the box," using position shifts that give you greater movement and versatility over the fretboard.

When this scale is played in fifth position, the highest note is C (first string, eighth fret) and the lowest note is A (sixth string, fifth fret), and you are stuck within the limitations of those boundaries. Position shifts open those boundaries, allowing us to play this scale from the absolute lowest note possible, the open low E, to one of the highest notes possible on a guitar, the D on the first string's 22nd fret.

**FIGURE 17** illustrates a very comfortable way to traverse this scale, as well the entire fretboard, across three and a half octaves of A minor pentatonic. Following the first note, the open low E, I fret a G on the third fret of the sixth string and then hammer-on up to A at the fifth fret. I then move over to the A string and start with a hammer from the third fret to the fifth, then slide up from the fifth to the seventh fret. This is followed by fifth-to-seventh-fret hammers on the D and G strings.

The next note is the key to this exercise: using the open high E string to sound the next note in the scale, I am afforded the opportunity to shift all the way up to 17th position and continue playing the rest of the scale.

Making that position shift sound seamless can be a little tricky, so it's a good idea to break the phrase up into smaller pieces, as shown in **FIGURE 18**. Begin by looping the first six notes of the scale with the position shift. Once that begins to feel comfortable, add a few more notes and continue to do so until the entire phrase feels comfortable and seamless. Familiarizing yourself with an expanded note register like this will afford you a range that is normally exclusive to keyboard players.

Another good (but admittedly in-

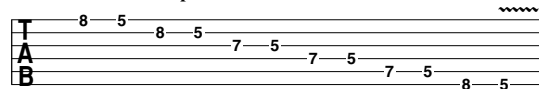
sane) position-shifting exercise is to play the entire A minor pentatonic scale in fifth position using just one finger. As shown in **FIGURE 19**, I first play the entire scale using only my index finger, which forces me to move it up and down the fretboard very quickly and, hopefully, accurately. I then repeat the exercise with the middle finger, ring finger and pinkie. This type of drill will get you accustomed to making instantaneous position shifts with every one of your fretting fingers.

The last position-shifting lick in this chapter is shown in **FIGURE 20**. This one looks a little crazy because I shift

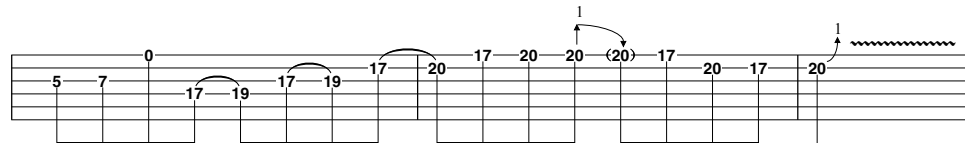
back and forth between two positions very quickly. In the first bar, I begin in 10th position and use string skipping, from the high E to the G, to play the first two notes. I then play the last four notes in 12th position. The lick in bar 2 is almost identical, except the first and fourth notes in the lick are played one fret lower. When you get this one up to speed, it sounds a little like a synthesizer lick.

Hopefully these exercises will help you to get a handle on position shifting, and I do hope you have fun playing minor pentatonic scales with your pinkie only. □

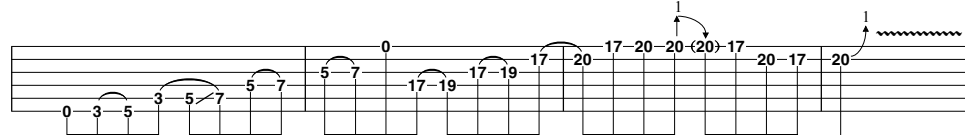
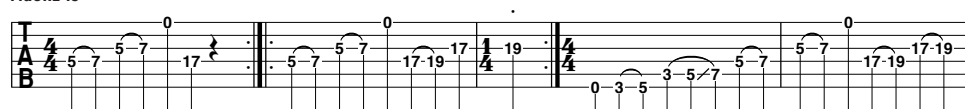
**FIGURE 16** A minor pentatonic scale



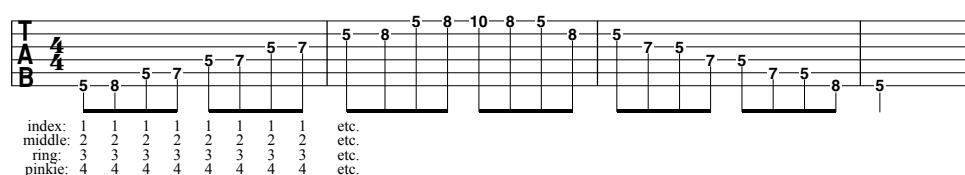
**FIGURE 17**



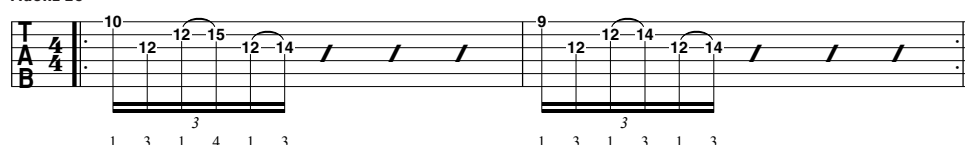
**FIGURE 18**



**FIGURE 19**



**FIGURE 20**



# ACCENTUATE THE POSITIVE

## ALTERNATE PICKING WITH ACCENT PATTERNS

IN THIS CHAPTER we're going to look at the concept of syncopation, and we'll begin with a rhythm figure that lays out an accent pattern. Keep that rhythmic syncopation in your mind, because I use those same accents in the crazy picking exercise that is the focus of this column.

Check out the rhythm guitar figure riff in **FIGURE 21**: this pattern is made up of root-fifth power chords played in a syncopated fashion against an open low-E pedal tone. This is essentially a two-bar rhythm pattern with very pronounced, specific accents: in bar 1 they fall on the downbeat of beat one, the upbeat of beat two and the downbeat of beat four; the accents in bar 2 fall squarely on beats one, two and three. If one were to recreate that rhythm orally, it would sound like this: ONE (and two) AND (three and) FOUR (and) ONE (and) TWO (and) THREE (and four and).

**FIGURE 22** illustrates the picking exercise, which is based on a long sequence of 16th-note triplets. Notice how the line is contoured with accents falling in the same places as in **FIGURE 21**. It's in the key of E minor and stays diatonic (within the scale structure of) to the E natural minor scale, which is also known as the E Aeolian mode (E F# G A B C D).

The great majority of the lick is alternate picked, but I throw in a couple of double hammer-ons, which serve to smooth out the sound. Also, it's very important to begin this lick with an upstroke. Throughout the exercise, the initial pick on each new string is executed in this manner.

I begin **FIGURE 22** in ninth position and play the initial pattern twice. I then move up to 12th position and follow the same pattern contour while staying within the scale structure of E natural minor, which necessitates a slight change in fingering. I then do the same thing in 16th position. In **FIGURE 22a**, I move the lick up the fretboard one scale degree at a time, beginning in ninth position on F#, then starting on G, A, B and C.

A great thing to do is focus on one part of the lick, such as the fragment shown in **FIGURE 23**. Play this slowly until it feels comfortable, then gradually increase your speed. □

FIGURE 21 ♩ = 152

FIGURE 22

FIGURE 22a

FIGURE 23



# FAST AND CLEAN

## ALTERNATE-PICKED 16TH NOTES—THE BUSINESS CARD OF SHRED GUITAR

**I WANT TO** talk about an ingredient that is essential to every guitar soloist's arsenal: alternate-picked 16th notes. Sixteenth notes are like the "business card" of shred guitar.

as the essence of the style is the ability to cleanly execute fast, alternate-picked 16ths throughout the fretboard. I'd like to show you a great 16th-note sequence that can be played all over the neck, is great for both your right- and left-hand technique and also sounds very melodic and musical.

For the sake of familiarity, let's use the key of E natural minor (E F# G A B C D). **FIGURE 24a** illustrates the initial shape, which we'll adapt to various positions, moving up the neck through the scale. Using alternate (down-up) picking, starting with a downstroke, I play on the top two strings exclusively, beginning with two notes on the high E string, followed by two notes on the B string, then one note per string, ending with two notes on the B. In this and all other examples, the index finger remains at the same fret throughout the melodic shape. Begin by playing this lick slowly, and gradually build up speed.

For **FIGURE 24a** we started on B, the fifth of the scale. Let's move the idea one note higher within E natural minor, beginning on C, the sixth (**FIGURE 24b**). Notice that the fingering is slightly different—this is to accommodate the structure of the scale: whereas the first two notes of **FIGURE 24a** were a whole step apart, and fretted with the ring and index fingers, the first two notes in **FIGURE 24b** are a half step apart, and are fretted with the middle and index fingers.

For **FIGURES 24c-g**, we continue to move the pattern up one scale degree at a time. **FIGURE 25** then begins on the fifth, B, one octave higher than where we started.

Each of these “shapes” offers a new challenge in terms of fret-hand fingering. **FIGURE 24f** is particularly interesting because you have to use all four fingers (fret-hand fingerings are indicated below the tab). Another cool thing about that lick is its *pull* to a C Lydian (C D E F# G A B) tonality (C Lydian and E natural minor are comprised of the same notes).

Now let's run these melodic shapes in sequence. In **FIGURE 25**, I play the initial lick five times and then descend through the shapes. I end with a little flair, bending the **F♯** up a half step to G and applying a *tapped harmonic*, executed by "bouncing" the pick-hand index finger

FIGURE 24a



FIGURE 24b

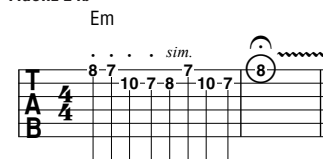
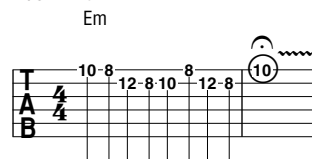


FIGURE 24c



\* *alternate picking*:  $\sqcap$  = downstroke;  $\vee$  = upstroke

FIGURE 24d

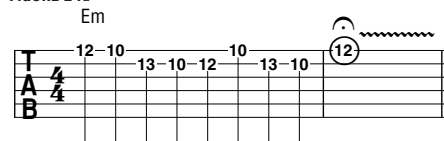


FIGURE 24e

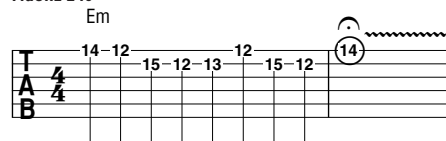


FIGURE 24f

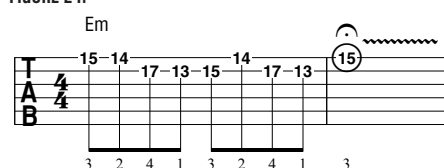


FIGURE 24n

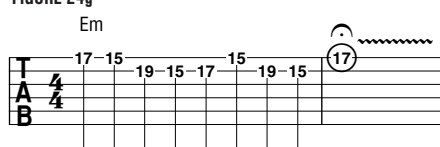
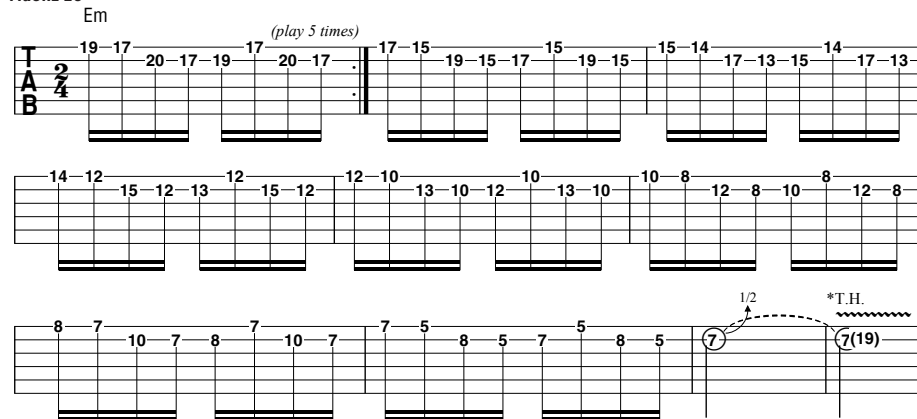
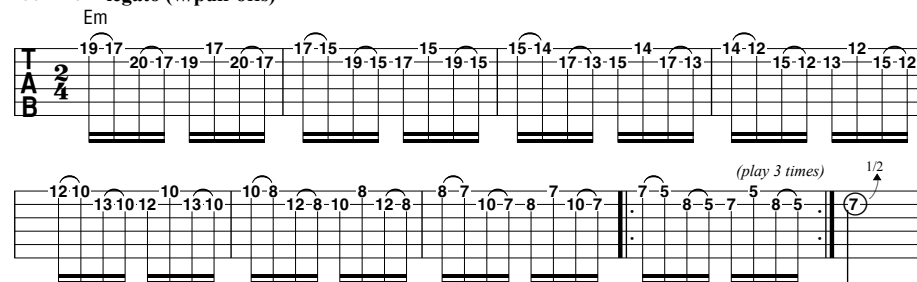


FIGURE 25



**FIGURE 26** legato (w/pull-offs)



directly against the 19th fret.

As these exercises include a few two-notes-per-string descending lines, a cool twist is to use pull-offs wherever possible in order to attain a smoother *legato* sound, as demonstrated in **FIGURE 26**. And despite what some people say,

using pull-offs and hammer-ons is not cheating! Legato phrasing is a very valid technique, and, personally speaking, I do not adhere to a “pick everything” approach when I play. I actually use a combination of picking and legato, which I think sounds great. □



# STICK YER NECK OUT

## USING NECK DIAGRAM TO YOUR ADVANTAGE

**ONE THING I'VE FOUND** very helpful in my guitar studies over the years is using what I call *neck diagrams* to map out riffs, patterns and melodic “shapes.” I find that diagramming makes it easier to visualize and, in turn, remember, new shapes on the fretboard.

A good example of a common fretboard shape is an open D chord: just about every guitar player is familiar with the triangular shape of a D “cow-boy” chord. But when the shape is a little more complex, it helps to map it out and study it visually.

Let's start with a string-skipping arpeggio in the key of A minor, illustrated in **FIGURE 27a**: this begins at the seventh fret on the D string, followed by the fifth and ninth frets on the G string, a skip over the B string and then the fifth and eighth frets on the high E string. Notice the visual shape created by these points on the fretboard (see diagram)—it looks a little like a rhombus. Pay close attention to the fret-hand fingering indicated for this shape.

Aside from picking every note, you can use hammer-ons and pull-offs, as there are two consecutive notes present on the G and high E strings. **FIGURE 27b** illustrates how to play the lick using pull-offs, and **FIGURE 27c** takes things a step further by incorporating pull-offs on the way down and hammer-ons on the way up. Using hammers and pulls like this makes the lick considerably easier to play than it would be if you were to pick every note because of the numerous skips over the B string.

Another advantage of using hammers and pulls is that you can get some good speed going and create interesting phrasings. As shown in **FIGURE 27d**, I use quick hammers and pulls on the high E and G strings to keep the lick moving along. Practice all of these patterns slowly, striving for a very smooth and even sound.

Now that you have this pattern clearly visualized, I'd like to show you a cool bonus benefit that I discovered. If we transpose the pattern up a minor third (three frets), we get a C minor arpeggio, as illustrated in **FIGURE 28**. But here's the twist: one day, I decided I was going to explore the entire fretboard and find every single place I could possibly bend a note within the context of a blues in A. In this key, most guitarists will bend the G string at the seventh fret, as shown in **FIGURE 29a**, or the B string at the eighth fret, as in **FIGURE 29b**, or perhaps the B string at

FIGURE 27a

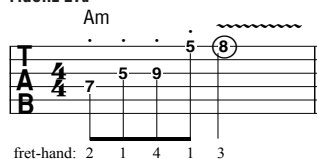


FIGURE 27c

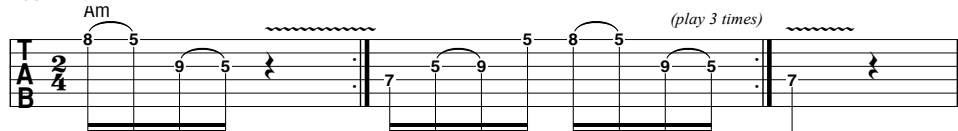


FIGURE 27d

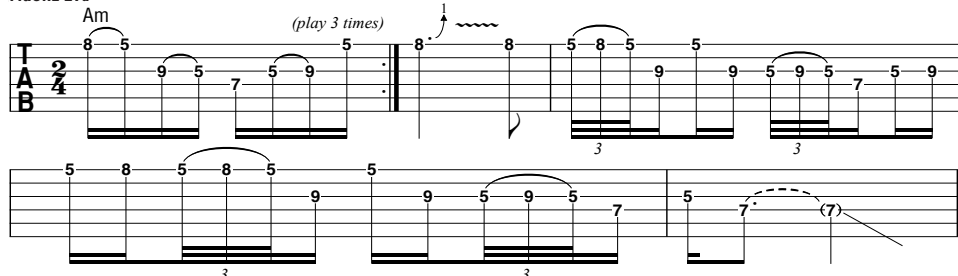


FIGURE 28

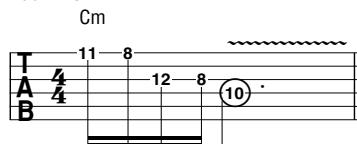


FIGURE 29a

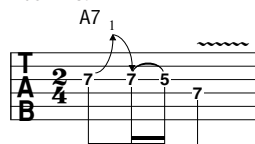


FIGURE 29b

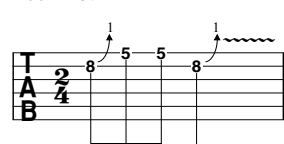


FIGURE 29c

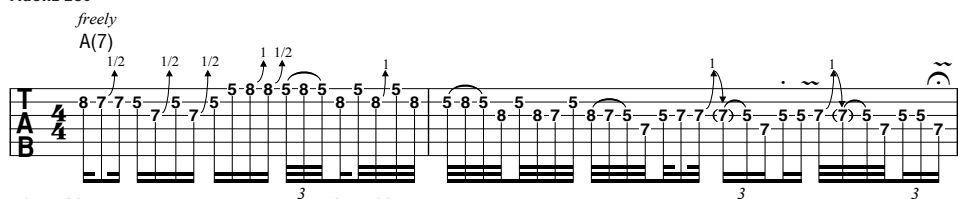


FIGURE 29d

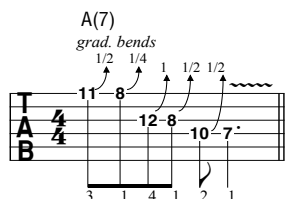
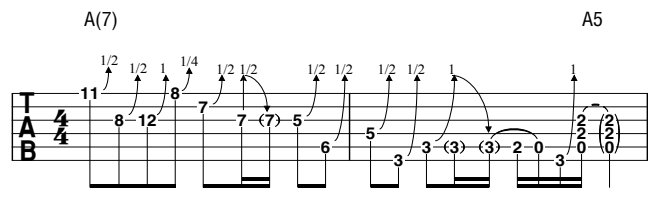


FIGURE 30



the seventh fret, as demonstrated at the beginning of **FIGURE 29c**.

String bending is a technique that imparts a lot of emotion and character to your playing, and as such I don't want to be limited to just one position—I want to be able to bend everywhere! In searching for more places to bend, I realized that, in the key of A, I could use the notes of the C minor triad shape in **FIGURE 28**, as long as I

bend each note up a certain amount to a “right” note in the key of A, as demonstrated in **FIGURE 29d**. Now that I had these new places to bend, I combined them with the more conventional “key of A” bends, as shown in **FIGURE 30**.

Try incorporating these bends into your playing. For the adventurous, take a really bad note in the key of A—like B $\flat$ —and bend the daylights out of it until it sounds good. ■

# SHAPE SHIFTING

## HOW TO ORGANIZE PATTERNS ON THE FRETBOARD

I'VE FOUND IT VERY helpful as a guitarist to familiarize myself with the layout of the keyboard on a piano. This in turn has made it easier for me to visualize patterns across the entire keyboard.

A quick look at the black keys on a piano reveal the logic with which they are laid out: starting on the far left and moving right, there are two black keys followed by three black keys, and the pattern repeats across the entire keyboard. The great thing for piano players is that any scale, chord or musical phrase in one position and octave can be easily moved to another because it will look exactly the same; you only have to memorize its “shape.”

The guitar, however, is not like this; depending on the string or fretboard position, the “shapes” of scales and riffs can change quite a bit, even when playing exactly the same notes. But I've developed an approach to the guitar's fretboard wherein you can use the same shapes, and very easily move them through different octaves.

As shown in **FIGURE 31**, there is an A note located on the sixth string's fifth fret, another A one octave higher located on the seventh fret of the fourth string (two strings over and two frets higher), and another A located at the 10th fret on the second string (two strings over and three frets higher).

It's very valuable to memorize the positions of these three A notes, because the patterns of many licks based around one of these A notes can easily be moved to either of the other two A notes. This is especially true if the lick falls on the sixth and fifth, fourth and third, or second and first strings, because these pairs of adjacent strings are tuned in fourths, and the shape of any lick on these pairs of strings will be identical.

A simple example is an A5 power chord: **FIGURE 32a** combines an A root note on the sixth string with an E note, which is the fifth, on the fifth string; you can move this shape up an octave to the fourth and third strings, two frets higher (**FIGURE 32b**), or the second and first strings, three frets higher (**FIGURE 32c**).

**FIGURE 33a** illustrates an A major triad (A C# E) played on the bottom two strings; we can move this same triangular shape over to the other A notes (**FIGURES 33b** and **33c**) and yield the same musical result in higher octaves.

In comparison, fingering the notes of this arpeggio across all of the strings in one position would give us something like what is illustrated in **FIGURE 34**,

FIGURE 31

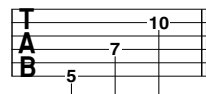


FIGURE 32

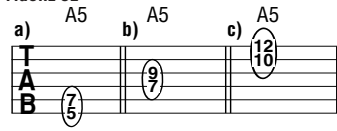


FIGURE 33

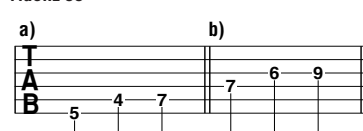


FIGURE 34

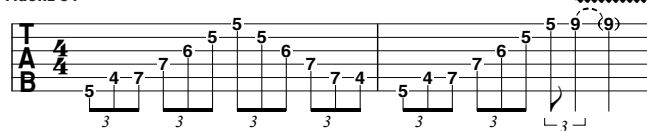


FIGURE 35

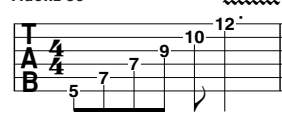


FIGURE 36

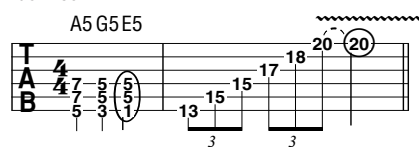


FIGURE 37a

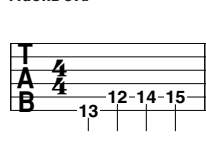


FIGURE 37b

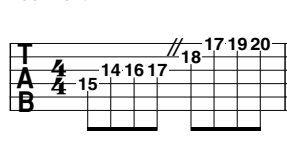


FIGURE 37c

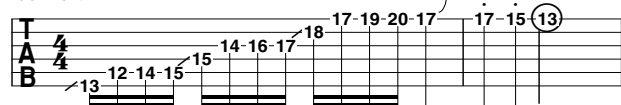


FIGURE 39a

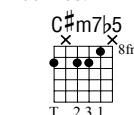


FIGURE 38a

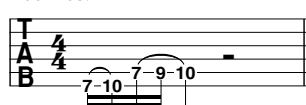


FIGURE 38b



FIGURE 39b

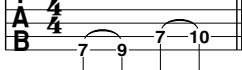


FIGURE 39c

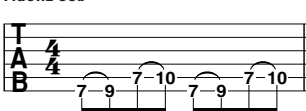
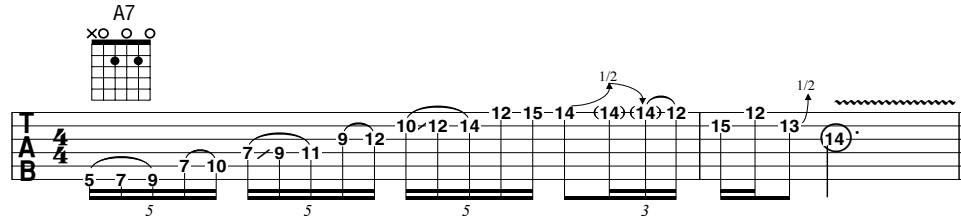


FIGURE 39c



which is a little more work for the brain because it involves different “shapes.”

Let's use this approach to create licks.

**FIGURE 35** incorporates the root/fifth “power chord” concept, with the notes played separately and in sequence. Given a chord progression like A5-G5-F5, as shown in **FIGURE 36**, you can play that lick in F over the F5 chord. Add a few notes to that shape, and we can get an F Lydian sound, as shown in **FIGURES 37a-c**.

Let's apply the concept to an E minor lick (**FIGURE 38a**). We can move this up one and two octaves, as shown in **FIGURE 38b**, fretting it exactly the same way. For fun, try improvising around those shapes.

**FIGURES 39a-c** incorporate this concept with a C#m7b5 arpeggio; for an additional twist, **FIGURE 39c** positions a C#m7b5 arpeggio-type lick over an A7 chord, which yields a cool, fusion-y A9 (A C# E G B) sound. □



# UNITED MUTATIONS

## MASTERING MUTING TECHNIQUES

ONE OF THE MOST important things about playing rock and roll guitar is to make *big rock and roll motions*. If you see a guitarist who's playing with the tiniest of physical motions, it's not very

exciting to watch. But a guitarist that's bouncing and moving around, swinging his arms and playing rhythm or lead with real energy—that, to me, is much more exciting and much more *rock*.

It's not always easy to play the electric guitar with such physical abandon, because it's difficult to maintain perfect control over a cranked-up guitar and amp. When playing just one string, you have to control the other five so that they will not make any unwanted noises.

The solution is to use various parts of your fret-hand fingers and thumb to mute different strings. In **FIGURE 47**, I'm picking across all six strings while using the fret hand to block every string except the fourth, on which I'm fretting and shaking notes with my ring finger. The top three strings are muted by the underside of the index finger, the fifth string is muted by the tip of the ring finger, and wrapping the thumb over the top of the neck mutes the sixth string.

Another useful way to mute is to use what I call "pick muting": after picking a note with a downstroke, I immediately stop the string from ringing by lightly touching it with the pick on the upstroke. Likewise, after picking an upstroke, I immediately touch it lightly on the downstroke. As demonstrated in **FIGURE 48**, this produces a *staccato* sound, which means "very short in duration." In **FIGURE 49**, I begin by allowing the notes to ring as long as possible (known as *tenuto* articulation), and then I switch to a *staccato* attack. In both examples, I use alternate picking throughout, alternately damping the string with either an upstroke or a downstroke; this is more clearly illustrated in **FIGURE 50**.

Using this technique, you can create some really great aggressive-sounding licks, like the ones shown in **FIGURES 51a** and **51b**: both of these freely improvised phrases combine the *staccato* attack with the *legato* ("smooth") sound of hammer-ons and pull-offs.

You can, of course, gain further control over the strings by additionally *palm muting* them, laying the edge of the pick-hand palm across all of the strings at the bridge saddles.

The sooner you master these muting techniques, the sooner you'll be able to rock out and still play with a good measure of control over your instrument. □

FIGURE 47

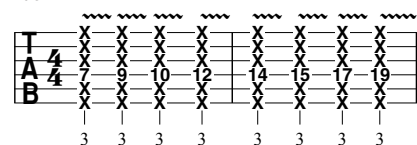


FIGURE 48 ck muting

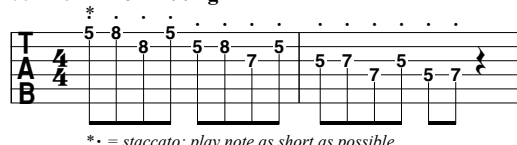


FIGURE 49

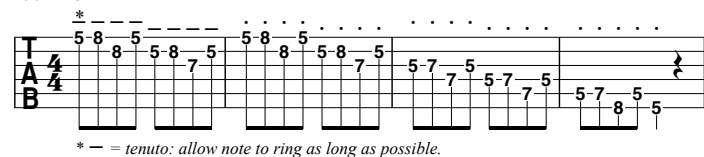


FIGURE 50

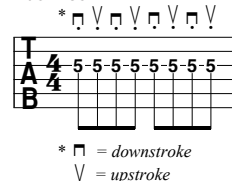


FIGURE 51a

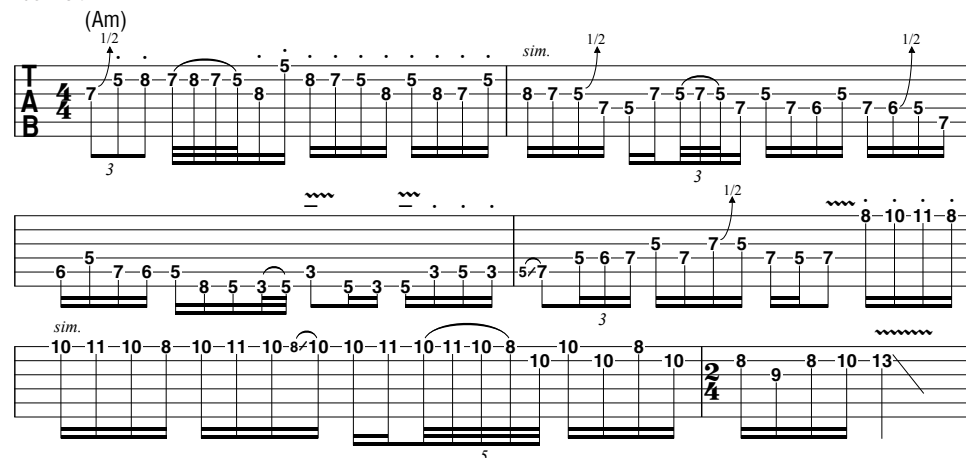
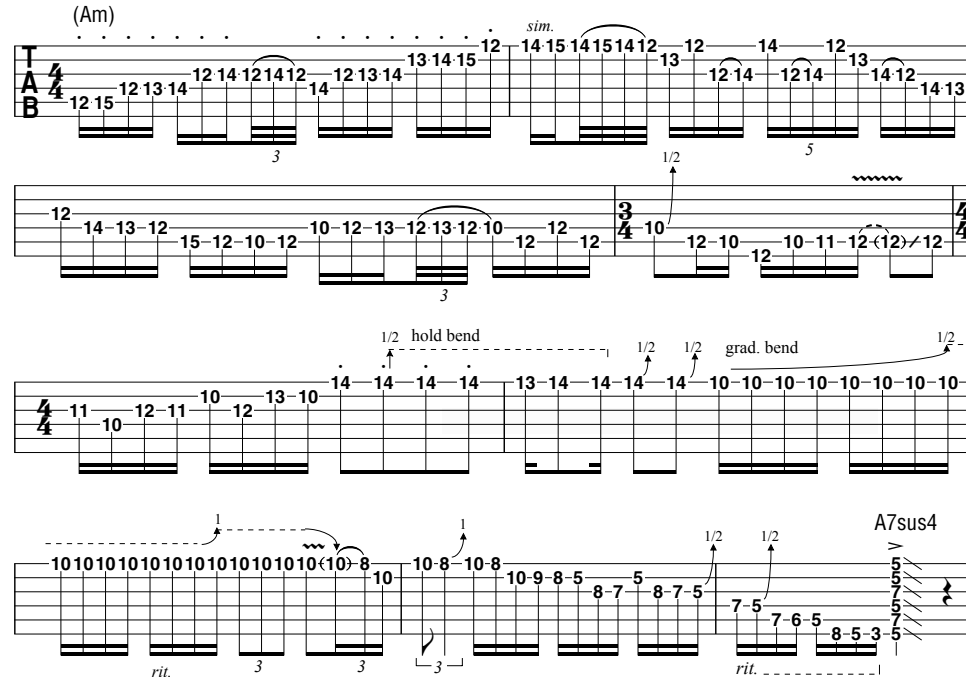


FIGURE 51b



# BREAKIN' OUT

## THE BLESSINGS AND BENEFITS OF LIVE PERFORMANCE

**BEING A FULL-TIME** guitar player is an amazing experience. I've had this "job" for the past 20 or so years, and it's brought me a great deal of happiness.

I've often thought about the most important aspects of my job. One is that, when I perform, it's not necessarily essential that I play all the notes perfectly or in a technically pristine manner. More important is that I have a *great time*. If I am really having fun onstage, that energy translates to the audience and they have a great time too. Of course, if I hit lots of wrong notes, I definitely won't be having a good time. But if I hit one bad note and in my mind I'm thinking, "I don't care—the rest of it is great," then everything is cool. It's all about enjoying having the opportunity to perform music.

This brings me to the matter of the difference between being a “bedroom” guitarist and one who is experienced and comfortable playing live in front of people. I’m of the firm belief that when performing onstage you should play the guitar with more than just your fingers—you should play with your entire body.

I performed at a tribute to the Who last year, and had to follow Pete Townshend's lead when it came to recreating his parts. Pete absolutely does not play with just his hands; he uses his whole body, including his back, torso, legs and arms. It's a stunning experience to play Who songs with the mindset of being a vessel for the music, as Pete does. The Who's music is very high-energy, and it feels great to stand up and play it with all your might.

One of the first times that I really “got it” and understood what this meant was when I was listening to Jimi Hendrix. I shouldn’t say “listening,” because my parents gave me a couple of Hendrix albums when I was young, and I did like them, but the thing that really got me excited was when I saw a Hendrix movie, and suddenly I could watch how he played, and how he moved when he played. For example, he took a very simple string-bending lick, along the lines of **FIGURE 52**, and just *shook the earth* with the thing by adding such physical force and rhythmic drive to it. There was so much power in his playing, and I thought, “Oh, that’s it—*that’s* why people keep talking about Hendrix.”

To play rock music back in those days, you had to get together with

FIGURE 52

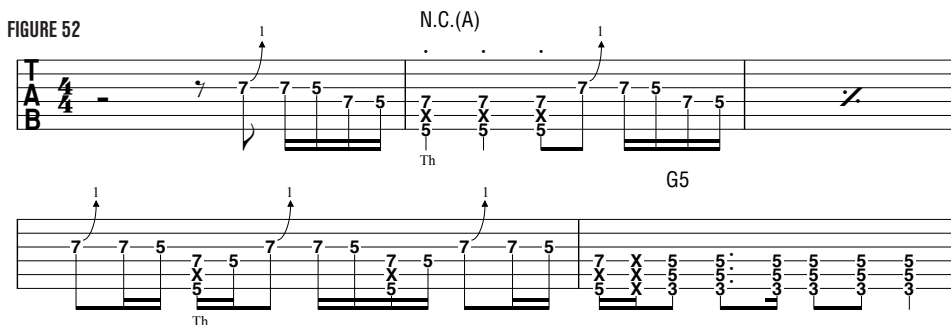
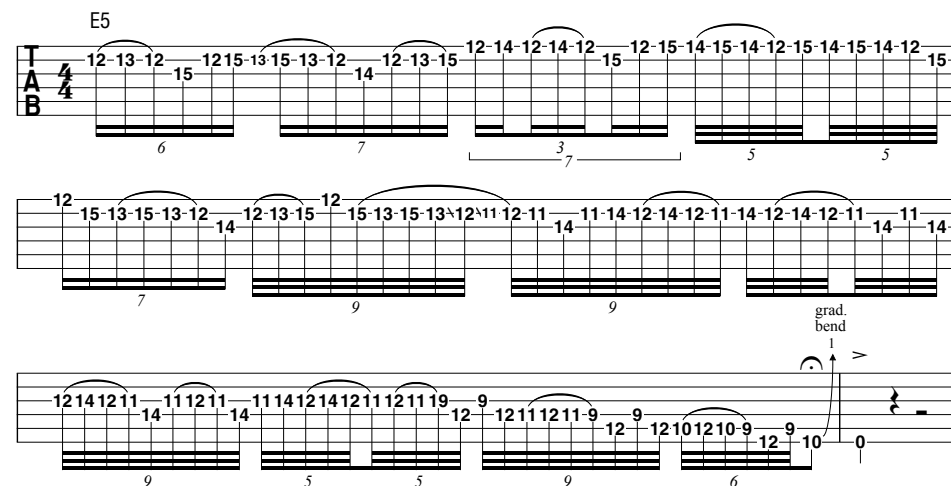


FIGURE 53



other musicians and crank up the amps loud, as opposed to simulating this via using Pro Tools in your bedroom. This is why so many musicians of Hendrix's era tended to be good at delivering powerful musical statements to the audience. I encourage you to get together with other musicians and find a place where you can crank it up.

There are an infinite number of things to be learned from live performance. An obvious one is getting over making a mistake—if you're used to merely hitting "undo" on your keyboard, you won't know how to deal with it when you are onstage.

All the pioneers of rock—Jimi Hendrix, Pete Townshend, Eric Clapton, Jimmy Page and Eddie Van Halen, to name a few—learned these valuable lessons early on. When you think of young Eddie jamming in his basement with his brother Alex, you can envision how the two of them learned to play together like they were one person, or like musical twins. If you can build musical relationships by

finding musicians you enjoy playing with, and do so over a long period of time, you will increase the likelihood of making *magic* come out of your guitar. So play with other musicians as often as you can. If you know that the drummer is showing up at seven o'clock, it will motivate you to get your act together. I've written many a song using that specific motivation.

Here's another tip: Even if you are playing some terrifying shred-type licks, you should end the solo with as much expression as you can muster. For example, if you play something like **FIGURE 53**, which features some blazingly fast shredding, end things with an expressive bend and some extreme body movement, in order to send it off with a big exclamation point. Try to harness as much energy as possible and channel it into your playing.

This wraps up our the Shred Alert. I hope you've learning the techniques I've taught you, and that they help your playing to improve and become more expressive. 